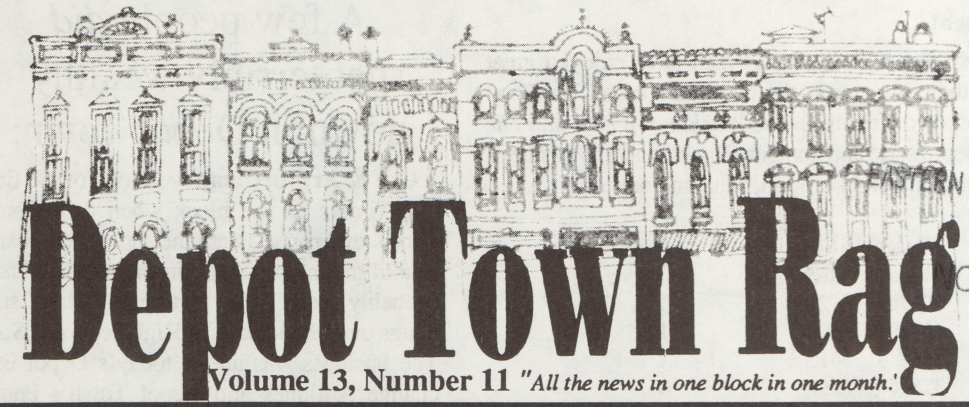


EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
NOV 05 1990

Depot Town Rag

Volume 13, Number 11 *"All the news in one block in one month."*

100% FREE Rag content

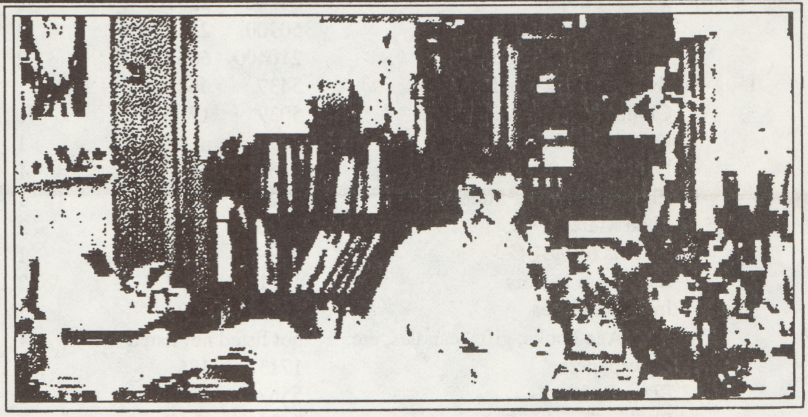
November 1990

- **Wealthy Depot Towners**
- A taste of the block
- Food for thought
- *Historic restaurant jokes*
- **New marketing approach**

. . . and other strictly local stuff

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Depot People: Troy Robine



26-year-old Troy Robine (right) proves you don't have to be as old as the buildings to enjoy doing business down in Depot Town. He started working with Mom and Dad, Sharon and Richard, at the family's Olde Towne Coin & Gold when it opened in the tiny space two doors west of their present location ten years ago.

As they get ready to celebrate a decade in the old district, the Robines also are enjoying their elegant new shop at 24 East Cross Street, which they bought and remodeled three years ago. The larger shop harbors many golden surprises, whether it be coins, 14K jewelry -- even a Remington sculpture of the Old West.

The traditional family business also does appraisals and is a member of the Michigan Jewelers Association.

A Dickens of a time!

Victorian Holiday set for Saturday, December 1

- **11am Santa's Parade** (in an antique fire engine) from the River to the Railroad Tracks to the Freighthouse for Polaroids. A marching band will be sponsored by the Ypsilanti Press.
- **Horse drawn carriage rides** around the north end of the district.
- **Ice Sculpture** demonstration by Richard Teeples next to the tracks (Courtesy of Fingerle-Hollister-Wood Lumber Company).
- **Holiday Crafts Bazaar** with the Farmers' Market in the Freighthouse.
- **Baking Contest** (information at local businesses) with an antique Victorian Baking Cupboard as the Grand Prize.
- **Music of the season** by Our Lady's Madrigal Singers and other choirs in the Freighthouse.
- **Business Open Houses** and window displays up and down both streets.
- **Raffles and drawings** to be announced.

Riverside Park's

Festival of Lights

November 18 - December 31

Park in the Depot Town lots and walk through the display this year!

A business analysis: One in 9 million?

The Nation, the State, and Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town

Depot Towners always wonder at the great successes — and failures— in nearly 150 years of doing business down by the railroad tracks. Across the nation, from the ABC of it (Abdominal Supplies, Barricade Services, Carnivals) to the WXYZ end (Wake-up Calls, X-Ray Apparatus & Supplies, Yacht Brokers, Zoos), somebody has counted them up, issued them permits and collected taxes from most of America's businesses over the years.

As this nation enters another economic recession, many local merchants are predicting imminent vacancies at many of the area's cinder block strip malls and a new popularity for the more traditional, established commerical districts with their stable rents, long history of service and loyal clientele. Commerical districts like Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town have fared well through the ups and downs of Capitalism. No one ever got terribly wealthy doing business down here, [But some did! See sidebar on page two.] but they stayed in business a long time and took good care of their families and customers. With this long-range view in mind, Depot Town Association officers are beginning to examine a wider business climate to determine what's good for the the district. It's another old tradition down here. As the Old Caboose's motto states, the district is "firmly rooted in the past — with a clear view forward."

There are many ways to compare businesses. For instance, what's the ratio of Hudson Dealers to Tattoo Parlors to Video Tape Rentals in the Nation, State and Neighborhood?

Businesses: Old to New

	United States	State of Michigan	Depot Town
Hudson Dealers	0	0	1
Tattooing	50900	not listed	1
Video Tape Rentals	30879	1583	0

It is left up to the local entreprenurial analyst to deduce some point of view from these facts. Should we try to match a national or state average? Or should we strive for uniqueness? How are we like/unlike the popular strip malls? What should we be looking for to complete our block?

Is one of each kind of business enough? How many is too many? What makes a good balance? Antique Dealers agree that "more is better," but fifteen Wig Shops in a block might signify something other than success for the district. Could we use some Packard, Auburn and Cord Dealerships, as well? How many more Tattoo Parlors do we need for balance?

[Continued overleaf]

[**Business Analysis** continued from Page One]

The following lists feature some of the Depot Town businesses which have enjoyed great popularity in the past decade. In many cases they don't meet the national norms; Fast Food Franchises and Dressmaking Shops seem to operate differently. *The Washington Post* and *The Depot Town Rag* are in great contrast to each other in style and content. But business is business.

Here's the current count of such enterprises in the neighborhood, state and nation:

Businesses A to Z:	United States	State of Michigan	Depot Town
Auto Body Repairing & Painting	70676	312	1
Auto Radiator Repairing	12289	540	1
Auto Electric Service	8662	361	1
Antique Dealers	32896	859	4
Bakers	29884	1150	1
Barber Shops	64642	2232	2
Bars (liquor licenses)	50900	2162	4
Beauty Shops & Shoppes	210400	6665	2
Book Dealers Used & Rare	5439	664	1
Clothing Bought & Sold	5039	171	1
Drapery & Curtains	1117	not listed	1
Dress Makers	3457	83	1
Electronic Power Supplies	272	not listed	1
Food Markets	11605	not listed	2
Florists (retail)	51994	1749	1
Ice Cream Parlors	18512	1897	2
Importers/sales	12698	162	1
New Age books, gifts, candles, etc.	not listed	not listed	1
Newspapers	17137	486	1
Pizza Parlors	55621	2652	1
Picture Framing	963	not listed	1
Photographers	22312	729	1
Printers	6084	2034	1
Restaurants [Fast or Slow]	336193	10785	4
Domino's	2715	?	0
Pizza Hut	4946	?	0
Taco Bell	2621	?	0
Wendy's	2839	?	0
School Supplies	2364	not listed	1
Trading Posts	183	not listed	1
Theatrical/Stage Lighting Equipment	578	not listed	1
Zipper Repairing	474	not listed	0
TOTAL	65,559,358	35,693	40

Source: *American Business Information Lists of 9 Million Businesses* compiled from the Yellow Pages and telephone verified.

A few people *did* get terribly wealthy down in Depot Town:

Cye & ArthurCamp were two of the first Big Timers on the block when their Camp Photo enterprise was the only composite school picture company in the nation. They probably took *your* picture — which still hangs over the lockers at High School U.S.A. The business was above today's Depot Exchange Antiques and Depot Town's Photo Street commemorates their great success.

Walter P. Chrysler's step mom operated a rooming house next to what is now Picture Perfect Tattoo. He helped chop wood there for the cook stove, then went on to found a car company and build a new place in New York named after his family business.

Shelly B. Hutchinson lived two houses around the corner from the depot, worked in a shoe store in Depot Town, eventually founded the S & H Green Stamps corporation and then built the most ostentatious house in town just to "show those uppity West Siders" (now High Scope's world headquarters on North River Street at Forest Avenue).

Preston Tucker had one of the best ideas in the post war automotive industry and developed his unique and safe vehicle in what is now Marsh Plating Corporation. When Jeff Bridges played his part in the Hollywood movie, he stood in front of a house that wasn't nearly as pretty as the east side address Tucker really lived in. Tucker's idea was too good for the automotive establishment, however, and he was promptly put out of business and into bankruptcy.

Thomas S. Monaghan started his first pizza shop just up the hill from Depot Town. Now his Pizza Farm barn threatens to dominate the landscape of Ann Arbor. Other Monaghan conglomerates include the Detroit Tigers baseball club, much of a northern Michigan island and Central American chapels.

And, if we can count a block-away-pizza parlor, then we'll have to include the numerous mill owners who took advantage of the drop in water level between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor to exploit their holdings into airports, land, hospitals, state governors and much, much more.

Depot Town's financial dealings have reached long and far. That's why **Benjamin Follett, Mark Norris** and their associates established the "first safe bank in the Michigan Territory" in the southwest corner of the Follett House down in Depot Town. It went on to become the National Bank of Ypsilanti, then Bank One. It's still in business.

So is Depot Town.

MESSINA'S CHEESE
At the Ypsilanti Farmers' Market
Wed or Sat 483-1480 or 459-1995 any time
Organic, Amish Raised
FRESH TURKEYS
At the lowest prices in town!

MYOMASSOLOGIST
Joan M. Scully
Massage Therapy
434-5317
Recovery Oriented• Women's Issues
Stress Relief • Therapeutic Massage
Reflexology
Gift Certificates available

Ike's Depot
Barbershop
40 East Cross

CITY BODY
20 East Cross Street
Front end alignment
& Collision repair

Toward a more dynamic marketing approach for the Depot Town district . . .

Proposed by incoming DTA president, Bill French, to replace the previous operation in order to streamline district image and promotion:

Services to be offered to Regular Members of the Depot Town Association

(*Regular* = property owners)

We're not just another Strip Mall!

- **Snow removal**
- **Sidewalk and parking lot maintenance**
- **Planting and summer-long maintenance of beds, trees, gutters**
- **Window washing**
- **Interior cleaning**
- **Promotions**

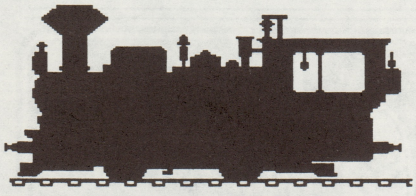
We can make it work!

DTA 1990

- Special newspaper section ads
- Brochures to Chamber of Commerce, Visitor & Convention Bureau, Radisson Resort, etc.
- Lighted billboard and its maintenance
- Depot Town Rag sponsorships

Neighbors working together. . . .

Regular Memberships to owners would be assessed by a formula based upon number of business units (e.g., 3 stores, 6 apartments = 9 units). The total cost of the above services would determine unit costs. Neighbors are working together to design a formula this month.



Westward, Rails

- William G. Brown

Turn back the time for a few years,
And gaze into the golden west,
To days when hardy pioneers
Put their courage to fearsome test.

Then westward turn our eyes today,
Toward the fulfillment of a dream;
No longer wolf or bison stray
Across the prairie, by the stream.

Instead, great cities meet our gaze,
Bound close by bands of glistening steel,
Brought forth - all men's minds to amaze -
By sweat, blood, steam and turning wheel!

[After Ypsilanti being the Michigan Central's railhead for so many years, some say the only reason Ann Arbor and Chicago grew was because the early trains did not have brakes!]

Dateline: Depot Town

Progress at the MCRR depot:

September saw tuck-pointing and scraping on the damaged mortar and October heralded a new paint job on the first floor brick of Ypsilanti's venerable depot. The restoration of the district's focal point gives answers to the most-asked question in the block: "What's happening with the old depot?" Area building-watchers now have a new plateau to report.

Three floors of new porches

appeared at the rear of 27 East Cross when Theodore Warrow's Sundeck Home Improvements repaired the back entries on the Rosen-Fine building which houses Designs on You and four apartments. The new Wolmanized addition and repair gives the rear of that commercial/residential block a new respectability.

Historically approved old restaurant jokes for the Ypsilanti Historic District

Snappy things to say to the waitpersons in any Depot Town eatery:

Customer: " Is this food on the menu any good?"
Waitperson: "Of course it is."
Customer: "Well, then, could I please have a clean one ?"

•

Customer: "Waiter! What's this fly doing in my soup?"
Waitperson: "The back stroke!"

•

Customer: "Do you serve crabs here?"
Waiterperson: "We serve anybody. Sit down and place your order!"

•

Customer: "How many people work here?"
Waitperson: "About half!"

•

Waitperson: "How's your meal, sir (or madam)?"
Customer: "Just the way I like it: cooked by somebody else!"

[Where is *Boys' Life* magazine now that we really need it? -ed.]

T E D'S
Auto Electric
307 North River • 483-1238

Cable TV & video games
FREE Delivery
Red Rooster Pizza
. . . and Dairy Bar
37 East Cross • 483-4555

THE OCCASION STATION
Still serving *Miller's* Ice Cream
NOW OFFERING . . .
• Cards • Wrapping Paper • Candy
• Helium Balloons • Cookies • Gifts
• Jelly Bellys • Recycled Paper Products
• Mugs • Stationery • T-shirts • Souvenirs
Open All Year 485-7546
42 East Cross
YPSILANTI, MI

Teachers Shop & LEARNING CENTER, LTD.
313-482-5373
15 E. CROSS STREET
YPSILANTI, MI. 48198
YOUR K12 CONNECTION
all materials for Classrooms & Curricula

The Depot Town Association, Inc. October, 1990

18 October, 1990

Agenda: The meeting was designed to end at 8:30pm to allow for time with invited City officials - Mayor King, City Manager Gilsdorf or his designate and Councilmember Hoffman. Councilmember Wells had a previous committment.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved and will be circulated to district businesses.

Treasury: $6481.42 in the General Fund.

President's Message: William French stated his interest in the Association "focusing on the business aspect of our community. Our house has been built; it's time for a new plane on the business level."

Questions prepared for the expected City officials:

- What is the City's long-range plan and what role does the Depot Town district play in it?
- What is the City's committment to the Depot Town Downtown Development Authority (DDA)?
- Will the City enhance its support of its Freighthouse to a seven-day-a-week operation and improve its communication with the rest of the district regarding events and parking for that facility?
- How might the City encourage further development of the MCRR depot?
- Does the City still plan to make good on last year's promise of marking street parking spaces and providing signage to highlight the parking lots?
- How might the services of the City police and DPW be improved within the district?

It was agreed that these questions would be presented, discussed and then given to the invited officials in written form for a later response.

Sally Richie was directed to continue in her plan to obtain **banners** on 15 light poles for up to $3500 by December 1. Design approval will take three weeks and a committee will review the company's proposal.

Victorian Holiday is set for Saturday, December 1. Steve Gross will handle press releases (See page one item).

Rag Report: Wanda Spiecer will no longer be writing 'color articles' for the monthly Rag.

NIFTY (New Initiative For Tourism in Ypsilanti): Michigan Travel Bureau solicits fall and winter color photos of the district for upcoming publications. A reprint on small town historic preservation and 'tourist wealth' was presented. Long-range plans for statewide promotion of the 1991 Victorian Holiday were begun. A video production will be made of this year's promotion.

Membership: Bonni Rosen-Fine is soliciting annual dues and will create a new membership card offering the option of Rag mailings or district pick-ups.

DTA business history documents are sought by president, Bill French.

Other business:

Discussion 'business unity.' What might bring the neighborhood businesses together in closer cooperation? Can we finish the Cable TV tape? Outside of earthquakes and killer bees, what causes real excitement on the block? Can building owners enhance merchant participation? What is there for new 'actives' to do in the Association? Jerry Tillman and Bill French will establish a meeting time for the district to conduct a 'problem census.'

The Golden Goose Award: to the invited City officials who failed to show up for the meeting.

The Best Yet Award: to the newly repaired back porch at 27 East Cross Street.

Membership opportunity:

The Depot Town Association, Inc., is a nonprofit, tax exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character and history of the Depot Town area and to ensuring the economic growth and stablity of the area.

Cut out and mail to:
DTA, 400 Market Place,
Ypsilanti, MI, 48198.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

__ Associate member $10.
__ Business/Property member $25.
__ Sustaining member $100.
__ Please mail *The Rag*. __I'll pick it up.

City Radiator
100 North River
483-2248

PIANO LESSONS
in my Depot Town studio
Steve Gustafson
483-3765

Your local ad here
for only $10 a month.

November 1990

Depot Towners are invited to participate in any or all of the following activities for the good of this old commercial district:

Development Authority (DDA)
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 11/8
Freighthouse Coffeeshop

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday, 11/15
The Old Caboose

Antique Engine Club
7:00 p.m. Thursday, 11/29[
Freighthouse Coffeeshop

THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

The Depot Town Association, Inc.
William French, president
c/o The Old Caboose
400 Market Place
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

Active Memberships :
- Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce
- Washtenaw Council for the Arts
- Neighborhood Associations of Michigan

You can rent

for your
• Birthday Party • Anniversary
• Catered Dinner • Board Meeting
Electric baseboard heating, tables and chairs.
Who could ask for anything more?
($25 + $10 refundable deposit)
Call 483-4256.

Hansen's
STANDARD PRINTING
35 E. Cross St. • Ypsilanti
In Historic Depot Town
Business Cards • Letterhead • Envelopes
Brochures • Forms • Newsletters • Copies
Weddings • Fax Service: 483-3130
(313) 483-0339
—Showing our new typestyles—

MENU

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY
NOV 05 1990

Aubree's

Pool is Cool

39 East Cross Street

Aubree's Saloon

The day was as fine as the hair on a frog — and in yonder Freighthouse, Keith Jablonski was making a success of his life by softly strumming "Margaretaville" on his guitar — Irene the Queen kept a-pouring coffee and serving goodies to the natives — somebody was telling about a slack in his fish line — and three-year old Gabriel was so happy getting high on his apple juice that he didn't give a "toot" when the train came by! As usual, Leprechaun-like Gary Urich kept dashing to and fro in the market area mumbling, "Fresh is best!"

Since good food is just like a "downer" for a lot of people, we sniffed our way around the corner to Aubree's Saloon which is on Cross Street, slaunch-wise from River, and therein lies an interesting history and a whole lot of great calories! Walking in, we said to "Flora Dora Laura" (the blonde waitress), "Please bring some fine wine before I dine," and Suzy Q came from behind the bar to help us tote our eggs and cheese from the Market. It was nice and cool and quiet and didn't resemble a bar too much, so we pondered the menu and the story on the back of it written by Bill and Sandee French, the owners, while all kinds of people went by on their appointed and disappointed rounds.

Aubree's was once known as the Neat House, and then Dad's Tavern, and Oliver House (with rooms for travellers, a dining-room, and a first floor saloon).

When WWII ended, this trendy (love that word) place became Ken's — a favorite watering hole for EMU students majoring in the art of imbibing. (I plagiarized that statement from the menu.) The '60s and '70s brought forth the Alibi . . . and in the ''80s Aubree's was finally hatched! Now, to use the modern vernacular, it upholds the "tradish" of Good Drinks, Good Meat, Good God, Let's Eat!

A taste of Depot Town

. . . in which Wanda, the wordsmith, wanders into the district's eateries. "Of cabbage and kings and good things to eat. . ."

Old Town Restaurant

In the midst of Ye Depoux Towne there are a few good places to eat — some gooder than others. The first one that comes into cab-view is the Old Town (no relation to the Old Town in Ann Arbor), which is next door to the old-fashioned cracker-barrel type barbershop called Ike's — without the quartet.

The soft-spoken, grey-headed owner of the Old Town is a Greek immigrant called John Kornilakis, who is a family man, and there is a Mrs. Shirley, and he gets lots of hugs and kisses from grand-daughter, Christin, who is most definitely and GRAND KID! This kid displays some old-world wisdom at a tender age when she declares, "It doesn't matter how you LOOK, but how you act toward other people." (It must be the Greek in her philosophy.)

The Old Town was established in 1973 and featured a salivating but simple menu at that time. . . breakfasts and goulash and beef stew . . . homestyle kinds of foods. It was expanded in 1978 and is still homestyle now in 1990, but with a larger and more mouth-watering menu that goes from soup to nuts and steaks and sandwiches and "nacho starters" and shrimp cocktails and so much more — at pocket-suitable prices.

The homespun and helpful people in this kind-to-the-stomach eatery are 29-year-old daughter Kathy (there're a few more Kornilakis offspring around), and we find Attentive Ilene, Grey-haired Ressi, Oriental Ruby and a few more who pass on their job satisfaction to the customers with smiles and courtesy. Folks from Ann Arbor, Canton, and all parts come here to eat, and all week it seems that eating at the Old Town is like falling in love . . . you keep hoping it will never end once you "taste" and sigh a happy sigh. (Wonder if a gyros sandwich has a soul?)

Other good places: Miller's Ice Cream at The Occasion Station, pizza and ice cream at the Red Rooster, and new developments are coming to the Cozy Corner.

SIDETRACK

Good Food, Good Drinks, Good Times
56 East Cross Street
483-1053

Sidetrack

Over at the Sidetrack — I call it Hamburger Heaven — owned by Linda French (sort of sister-related to Bill of the same last name) there are 20 employees on tap, but not all at the same time. As we sat in ravenous comfort we checked out how many desserts we could eat in one trip, as they all sounded sinful. A very handsome, one-earringed man approached . . . hark! Hark! Here comes Mark! the resident bartender. But if I wanted CPR it was already too late because I had slipped a large slab of onion onto a mouth-watering 1/3 pound of ground round. I ate this rapidly, eying the sign on my table that said MUNCHIES. My karma kept whispering, "Hey Big Mama! Don't run away with the calories!" So I took a deep breath and exchanged pleasantries with the Rosen-Fines, parents of blonde halo-topped Eric, aged two. For a moment I stopped chewing as Eric pointed out his nose, his mouth, his forehead and all of his magic little-people parts that were still new to him!

Hot on Mark's heels came Shannon (like a shot out of a cannon) to suggest more goodies at the Side-o'-the-track. I guessed she must be Irish. She said the place had been in business for 100 years but she didn't look near that old. They are open on the corner of N. River at 56 E. Cross every day from 11am to 1 am. However, the kitchen closes at midnight, so don't forget to bring your teeth with you! Sundays they are open from two pm until midnight, but they close before anyone gets wasted. Thoughtful folks.

As I left this friendly establishment, I remembered an old Irish blessing: "May the wind be ever at yer back, and may ye be in heaven an hour a'fore the devil knows yer dead." And, as full as a tick, I burped "Bye Mark. It's getting dark," and I took a menu with me to wile away the lonesome hours so I could WAIT AND SALIVATE. Woe is me! - Wanda Spiecer

RAGTIME

YPSI FOOD COOP

Fresh produce every day!
Organic chicken, eggs and beef
Open to the public
7 days a week
312 North River Street
483-1520

BELL, BOOK & CANDLE
44 E. Cross St. • 487-1970

J. R. TRADING POST
GENERAL STORE
Old, New and In-Between Things
MANY GIFT ITEMS - Old Records
The latest fashion in
HATS for Men and Women
21 East Cross • 483-5870

A friendly, family kind of place
Olde Towne Coin & Gold
24 East Cross
We buy & sell coins, 14K jewelry
ANA member - appraisals
Mich. Jewelers Assn.
483-6155

Designs On You Stitchin' Shop

- Gowns for all occasions
- Custom Apparel
- Evening & Career Wear
- Alterations
- Patterns created

482-2010
27 E. Cross
Tues-Fri 10 am -6 pm
Sat 10 am - 5 pm
Evenings by appt.
EUROPEAN DRESSMAKERS

COUNT ON KELLY FOR QUALIFIED TEMPORARY HELP.
√Office Clerical √Accounting
√Personal Computer √Light Industrial
√Word Processing √Marketing
√Data Entry √Technical Support
Ann Arbor - 761-5700
Ypsilanti - 482-7749
KELLY SERVICES The Kelly Girl® People

ANTIQUES

THOMPSON BUILDING MALL
Antiques and Stained Glass
412 North River • 483-3472
Buying & Selling of Estates
and/or Single Items

JAMES MacDONALD'S
ANTIQUES
&
APPLE ANNIE'S
VINTAGE CLOTHING
29 East Cross • 481-0555

We love to buy Antiques
DEPOT EXCHANGE ANTIQUES
54 E. Cross • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

RIVER ARTWORKS
PROFESSIONAL CUSTOM FRAMERS
482-8785
48 EAST CROSS STREET
in Historic Depot Town
QUALITY• TIMELY SERVICE

Old Photos Reproduced
B&W/Color Printing, Double Prints
IMAGE PHOTO LAB
Mon. thru Fri. 10 to 6, Sat. 10 to 3
Michael Leach 11 East Cross
Toni McCarthy 482-3370

Our Little Secret
Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 E. Cross Street
483-3637

Hon's
Flowers & Fancies
46 East Cross
482-2124

KATRINA'S HAIR STUDIO

Featuring KATRINA'S COSMETICS
483-3644
Matrix-Paul Mitchell

Esquire
Custom Drapery & Blinds
Custom Draperies
Vertical Blinds • 1" Blinds
Shutters • Shades • Wallpaper
Installation • Repairs
Ann Arbor 663-7011
Ypsilanti 482-6338
10 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198